

DAVIS COUNTY (UTAH). COUNTY COMMISSION

[256]

MINUTES, 1852#

DESCRIPTION: These minute books record the actions of the county commission, the governing body of the county. The commission (known during the territorial period as the county court) was authorized to manage all county business and property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing, and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; incorporating municipalities; and by the late 1940s, zoning and planning.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court.

The court was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This included auditing all claims against the county and payments by the treasurer. The court controlled all timber and water privileges and could grant mill sites and herd grounds. Court members created election precincts, road districts, and school districts and appointed superintendents of such districts. They located sites and oversaw the erection of public buildings. The selectmen in conjunction with the court were to provide for the maintenance of the poor, insane, and orphans. They levied property taxes for county purposes. They were also responsible for any litigation involving the county.

All these activities are noted in the minutes. The day's entries are prefaced by date; after 1854,

names of those present; and where and when they met. Bids received, and bills and wages paid in conjunction with the activities are noted. The predominant activities in the territorial period involve laying out roads, bridges, and irrigation canals. Names of individuals appointed as water masters, road supervisors, or other county officials (e.g. collector, physician, pound keeper) are mentioned frequently. Individual names and actions taken are also noted for the indigent, insane, and infirm.

The county court made early, abortive attempts to license liquor in the county, but at that time, the responsibility was legally a function of the legislature. In 1860, the legislature mandated that liquor licenses be obtained from the county courts; butcher licenses were added in 1865. In 1884 the legislature mandated that business licenses in general be obtained from the county courts for operation in unincorporated county areas; most applications were for liquor licenses. Provisions were made the same year for the county court to approve the incorporation of towns. The court's role in tax abatements and care of the indigent, insane and orphans also becomes more apparent by the 1870s and 1880s. The granting of franchises for such things as telephone and railroads increases as well by the end of the century.

With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes.

There is an ongoing emphasis on roads and road districts in the early 20th century. More franchises#for electricity, railroads, pipelines, etc.#are granted and the full details recorded. Water rights, especially in conjunction with irrigation companies and drainage districts continue to be mentioned regularly, particularly the Bonneville Irrigation District in the 1920s. Other responsibilities noted in the minutes include supervision of the conduct of all county, district and precinct officials, boards, and agencies. Both personnel wage scales and departmental purchases form part of audits and annual budgets, although these are just a dollar value per category/department. All personnel actions are recorded, by individual name, for county employees; such actions include appointments, hourly or salaried wage increases, requests for car allowances or to use county vehicles, and requests for funds to attend conferences. Requisitions, bid proposals and apportionments are similarly detailed covering everything from a single typewriter, to a new nozzle for the fire hose, to vehicles for the sheriff's department, to equipment for major construction projects.

Commissioners served as canvassers of elections also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. The members continued as a board of equalization for county property assessments with the added authorization to refund taxes erroneously collected. Tax abatements, redemptions, and quit claims are common in the 1930s and into the 1940s. Commissioners continued to care for paupers and oversee public health and safety. The commission also continued to grant business licenses, pass ordinances, and issue bonds.

A major addition to county commission functions was made in 1941 when the commission was empowered to provide for the development and zoning of unincorporated areas of the

county and to appoint a planning commission. The first official planning and zoning resolution took place in 1948. The entries become progressively more detailed and inclusive covering zoning changes and subdivision layout. In particular, major functions of licensing and contracting, taxing, budgeting, and zoning are extensively documented. Numerous improvement districts for water, sewer, mosquito control, etc. were created beginning in the 1950s. Recreation taxes for softball, Antelope Island, golf, and the Great Salt Lake Authority as well as the more traditional county fair become frequent topics in the 1960s. Social issues such as programs for alcoholism, drugs, mental health, and employment are more frequent in the 1970s. Many programs involved detailed cooperative agreements and contracts with other communities or the federal government which are spelled out in the minutes. Contract agreements continue to be detailed in the 1980s for flood control, office equipment purchase and maintenance, mental health programs, planning services, refugee health programs, building inspection, etc.

ARRANGEMENT: The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting.

RESEARCH NOTE: Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects or private subdivisions; on private businesses operating within the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Davis county (up to and including the incorporation or disincorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

RELATED RECORDS: Series 15118 contains indexes to these minutes. Also, while the minute books summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Davis county agencies should be consulted.

PROCESSING NOTE: The Davis County Clerk as secretary for the Davis County Commission may have current holdings. Paper copy is retained permanently in the office. Filming was begun in 1966 by the LDS Genealogical Society and continued by the Utah State Archives. Volume R was accidentally filmed before volume S. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in June 1995.

CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description	Volume
1	1852, Mar	A
	22#1869, Jul 1	
1	1869, Sep	B
	6#1878, Mar 18	
2	1878, Mar	B
	18#1884, May 5	
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4	1945, Jan 2#	I
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5	1955, Jan	J
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6	1961, Jun	K
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6	1962, Jan	L
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7	1966, Aug	M
	10#1969, May 28	
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	11#1977, Aug 16	
8	1977, Aug	P
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	22#1984, May 14	
9	1984, May	R [see reel 11]
	16#1984, Oct 24	

Reel	Description	Volume
9	1984, Oct	S
	29#1985, Jul 1	
10	1985, Jul	S
	3#1986, Oct 8	
10	1982, Jun	R
	22#1984, May 14	
11	1984, May	R
	16#1984, Oct 24	
11	1986, Oct	T
	15#1988, Jun 22	